

MAGONIA ETH Bulletin

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EDITORIAL

Evidence to support the ETH is so thin on the ground that we are already scraping around for something worth printing in this bulletin. Yet in the USA it is taken for granted that it is the most sensible hypothesis for explaining puzzling - and many not so puzzling - UFO reports. The lack of physical evidence does not discourage the ETHers. They can easily mould official documentation and witness statements into ETH-shapes to keep the believers happy.

OFF THE WALL, THROUGH THE WALL AND UP THE WALL: THE ABDUCTION RESEARCHERS

Standardised, nuts-and-bolts aliens

If the ETH is to be taken seriously then its proponents should be able to produce serious evidence to support it. Most abduction researchers seem to favour 'paranormal' theories to account for the experiences they describe. As the paranormal hypothesis can explain everything it explains nothing, as anything mildly puzzling can be described in this way, thus relieving one of the necessity for any further thought or investigation. In other words, it is merely a form of intellectual laziness.

Some abduction researchers, though, have no time for the paranormal: they are nuts-and-bolts men. One of them in particular, David Jacobs, is now convinced that he has the explanation for the strange activities of the alien abductors. They are breeding human-alien hybrids who are being prepared to take over the world. This could happen very soon. (1)

David Jacobs and Budd Hopkins have become notorious for their work on producing a 'standard' version of the abduction experience. They also insist that abduction experiences which conform to the standard pattern are objectively real events and that the aliens are physically real creatures.

Through the walls

However, if they are physical beings then they should not be able to ignore the laws of physics, as we do routinely in our dreams. In a dream, walking through solid walls often presents no great difficulty, whereas in waking reality, common sense, common experience and the laws of physics tell us that this is impossible. It is important to emphasise here that when abduction researchers such as Jacobs and Hopkins talk about people being taken from their beds or their cars into UFOs, they are not talking about the out-of-the-body experience (or astral projection, as occultists call it) but a physical transfer of the abductee from bedroom to UFO, passing through any intervening physical barriers as easily as one walks through a patch of fog.

They can't be framed

They get quite upset when people refuse to believe this, so Jacobs has tried to do something to resolve the matter, with rather amusing results. As many people are, allegedly, frequently abducted from their bedrooms he decided to make use of video cameras 'to try to "catch" the aliens in the act'. (2) The abductee, Melissa Bucknell, slept with a video camera connected to a VCR pointed at her bed. There were no abductions for several nights until one morning when she slept late and she was abducted after the tape ran out! On another occasion she slept on the living room couch to get away from the noise of her neighbours arguing upstairs - and was again abducted.

The video camera was tried with other abductees and, if you haven't already guessed, they were never abducted when sleeping within the field of view of a working video camera. They claimed

to be abducted when they slept elsewhere or when there was a power failure, or when the camera developed a fault. One abductee felt the urge at 5.30 a.m. to get out of bed and turn off the camera. She 'remembered seeing Small Beings who were standing just outside of camera range directing her to do it'. (3)

In Britain, Christopher Kenworthy and his fellow researchers have tried a similar experiment. Some of the subjects 'remembered' being abducted, but when the tapes were played back they were seen to have been in bed all the time. However, 'on two separate nights which tally with their abduction memories, two of our experimenters were seen getting up and leaving the bedroom. In both cases they look asleep as they walk. In both cases they are missing for exactly three hours and 27 minutes. And then, still asleep, they walk back in and climb into bed.' (4)

Now, these experiments no doubt provide plenty of useful material for psychologists, but they tell us nothing about aliens. The failure to obtain physical evidence to support abduction stories leaves Jacobs unfazed, although he does despair of convincing a disbelieving world of the reality of alien activity before it is too late.

Competent hypnotists

A major problem, as Jacobs sees it, is that many abduction stories are either false or are genuine but badly distorted. The solution is to use only competent hypnotists. Jacobs makes it clear to us in his latest book that he is a competent hypnotist. (5) This is known to personnel managers as 'self assessment'. As an independent ufologist, Professor Jacobs has no line managers to appraise his high opinion of himself and his work. However, his colleagues think he is barmy, though he puts it more eloquently, if less succinctly: 'When I talk about the subject to my colleagues in the academic community, I know they think that my intellectual abilities are seriously impaired.' (6) As it is reasonable to assume that most of his colleagues are fairly intelligent, perhaps he should listen to them.

Secrecy

In order that the project being carried out by the aliens can proceed smoothly, secrecy is essential. Thus there must be no physical evidence or physical manifestation that would convince sceptics that something extraordinary is happening. To see what this would mean in practice let us consider the actions which the aliens need to take to abduct someone from a car and then return him without causing other people to suspect that anything is amiss.

The aliens must wait until there are no other vehicles nearby. They must ensure that other vehicles are not approaching the area of the abduction. They must take control of anyone who strays into the area. They must take all possibilities into account. They must be invisible. Their saucers must be invisible to radar as well as optically. They must check beforehand whether the temporary absence of the abductee would cause problems by arousing the suspicion of others who are expecting their imminent arrival at work or for some urgent appointment. So they must know what all the people in the area, or all those who could possibly be affected are doing or thinking of doing. If they are so clever, there is no reason why anyone should ever know about or suspect their existence, yet they have become an integral part of popular culture. Why?

Greys are the abduction experts

According to Hopkins, Jacobs and their followers, if the Greys have decided to abduct you there is nothing you can do to stop them. However, it seems that the Greys took over the abduction business because various types of ETs who were given the contract for abducting Earthlings in the past were not very good at it. They tended to get into difficulties because they didn't have the knack of gliding through walls, so had to use cruder methods. Take the following case, for instance:

In the early part of 1965 several reports appeared in the Buenos Aires press of attempts by 'Martians' to abduct people in the north-eastern part of the country. The following is the only case in which details are available.

One night in the first week of February, a man living at Torrent, near Santo Tomé, called his neighbours to come outside and observe five luminous objects flying overhead. Then a transparent craft landed, and from it emerged five 'Martians', nearly 2 metres high, each having only one eye in the centre of the forehead. On their heads were instruments giving off flashes of different colours. They entered a farmhouse and tried to seize a man, but withdrew in the face of the firm attitude of the villagers, and flew away.

On February 6, however, they returned and were seen by many people. Once again they tried to catch a man and failed. He escaped and gave the alarm. The villagers turned out in strength and fired their shotguns at the 'Martians', seemingly with no effect. (7)

How to avoid being abducted

Methods devised by Jacobs and his abductees to deter the Greys have so far proved unsuccessful. But I wonder if they have ever tried any of the old methods used to stop the fairies from abducting people? Katharine Briggs tells us that people had many ways of protecting themselves against fairies. These included: making the sign of the cross or carrying a cross, especially one made of iron; saying prayers or chanting hymns; carrying and sprinkling holy water or churchyard mould; carrying bread or salt; ringing bells and whistling; using certain herbs and plants, such as four-leafed clover, St. John's wort, and daisies (a child wearing daisy chains was supposed to be safe from fairy kidnapping). To stop the fairies entering your house, nail iron horse shoes above the doors. (8)

Some people think that the best protection against the Greys is disbelief. But, as Philip Klass warns, it must be a firm and sincere disbelief: ' . . . UFO-nauts will never abduct a "True UFO-Skeptic" (TUFOS), only those who secretly believe in UFOs and those who claim they are "not especially interested in UFOs." UFO-nauts can easily discriminate between a TUFOS and a EUFOS "Ersatz UFO Skeptic"'. (9)

So there you have it; when the kiddies stop believing in fairies, the fairies die. And the Greys are just modern-day fairies - aren't they?

References

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LOST IN THE FOREST: MIKE ROGERS AND HIS LOGGING CONTRACT

In the previous issue I expressed doubts as to the plausibility of problems with Mike Rogers's logging contract as a motive for perpetrating a UFO hoax. However, Philip Klass still thinks that this is the likely motive, and he sent the following letter:

Because of my hectic workload, I will deal here only with the Mike Rogers logging contract with the US Forest Service and whether he might have "staged" the incident in the hope of getting an "Act-of-God" extension for his contract - *without suffering the normal 10% cut in contract price* - as well as possibly winning the *National Enquirer* \$100,000 UFO prize (subsequently raised to \$1,000,000).

At the time of the (alleged) UFO incident, Wednesday 5 November, during the *3 months* since Rogers had got a contract extension on his Turkey Springs contract - taking a *10% contract price cut* - he and his crew had cleared only roughly *one-third* of the total acreage. To avoid a default, Rogers would have to clear *twice as much timber in the next five days as he had cleared in the previous three months* or obtain a contract extension.

On Tuesday 28 October, Rogers admitted to the Forest Service inspector that he could not complete the job on time and said he planned to meet with Forest Service contracting officer Maurice Marchbanks to request another contract extension (with another 10% price cut).

Question 1. As of 5 November (*8 days later*) - the night of the UFO incident - Rogers had *never* called or contacted Marchbanks to request a contract extension. **WHY NOT?**

On Saturday 8 November 1975, when Travis was still "missing", Rogers and Travis's older brother Duane, were interviewed (tape recorded) by ufologist Fred Silvanus. At one point, Rogers said: "See, this contract that we have [with the Forest Service] is *seriously behind* schedule. In fact, Monday [11 November] the contract is up [i.e. end date for completing the work]. We haven't done any work

on it since Wednesday because of this thing. And therefore it won't be done [by 10 November]. *I hope they [the Forest Service] will take that into account, this problem.*"

Question 2. What was Rogers "hoping" the Forest Service would do? (If they gave him a 5-day extension, he would not be able to complete the remaining 238 acres.)

Travis and Rogers claim that the Turkey Springs contract was the best, most profitable that Rogers had ever had.

Question 3. If this claim is true, why did Rogers and crew spend so much time working for other Forest Service contractors, neglecting Rogers's commitment on Turkey Springs?

(One possible explanation is that Rogers and crew prefer to work for *less pay* and help other contractors avoid default on their Forest Service contracts - even if it means that Rogers defaults on his own contract.)

Question 4. If the UFO incident were true, then it certainly qualified as an "Act-of-God", i.e., an extraordinary event that nobody could anticipate. If Forest Service officials *believed* the incident had occurred, they should have offered Rogers at least a brief extension of his contract *without penalty*. *But they did not. WHY?*

I look forward to your response to these questions.

Philip J. Klass, Washington, D.C.

So we are back to motives again. Did Rogers and Walton contrive a hoax in the hope that Rogers would be able to avoid a 10% penalty on his contract, or was the aim to try to win up to \$1,000,000 from the *National Enquirer*?

This does not seem to me to be the right way to go about solving this case. The scientific question is not *Why?* but *How?* The forensic scientist doesn't want to know *why* the burglar opened the safe, he wants to know *how* he did it. If the Walton affair is a hoax, why was it not exposed years ago instead of becoming a classic believe-it-or-not story?

Remember, a hoax would have involved the five other loggers in Rogers's gang and, probably, Walton's mother, his brother Duane, and possibly a few other people. There is also the question of the involvement of the police. If the incident had happened in Britain the hoaxers would probably have been charged with wasting police time - a criminal offence. Surely there are similar laws in America?

In *Skeptics UFO Newsletter* No. 51 (May 1998) Philip Klass comments on the fact that one of the loggers, Ken Peterson, refused to sign a paper giving permission (not legally essential) for him to be portrayed in the film (*Fire in the Sky*): 'If Peterson knew the incident were a hoax, this could explain his refusal to be portrayed by name in the movie.' But if Peterson knew it was a hoax, why didn't he just say so? What advantage do *all* parties to the hoax gain by keeping it going indefinitely? And how did they sustain the hoax in the face of intensive questioning and investigations by police, reporters, and ufologists? What sort of preparations did they make on the evening of 5 November 1975 to ensure that the police would be convinced that something serious had happened?

Any ideas, anyone?

REAL UFOS

Two mysterious objects carrying bright lights were seen travelling between Manchester and Leeds between about 5.00 pm and 5.45 pm on 2 February 1998. They seemed to be at a fairly low altitude and some witnesses said that they made a humming noise. There can be no doubt as to the reality of these sightings because of the large number of independent witnesses. At least two video recordings of them were obtained. A detailed report by Mark Ian Birdsall appears in the May-June 1998 issue of *UFO Magazine*. Attempts to identify them have so far been unsuccessful.

Andy Roberts, in his newsletter *The Armchair Ufologist* ('Tough on Ufology - Tough on the Causes of Ufology') suggests: 'Whatever agency was flying these craft sent them over built up areas and with lights on intentionally. They then monitor public opinion via the press, which gives them the feedback they need.'

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